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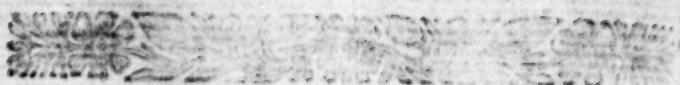


Mr. *LEEKE*'s
SERMON

PREACH'D before the
University of *Cambridge*.



LONDON
Printed by W. Innes and R. Mackenzie, at the
West-End of St. Paul's Church-yard. 1755.



MR. JAMES

FERMON



UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Pr
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*The Necessity of CHRIST's Satisfaction
maintain'd.*

IN A
SERMON

PREACH'D before the

University of *Cambridge*,

On the Fifth SUNDAY in LENT,

March 23. 1735.

AT

St. MARY's Church.

By ROBERT LEEKE, B.D.

Fellow of St. JOHN's College.

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Printed for W. INNYS and R. MANBY, at the
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To the Right Reverend the
Lord Bishop of London.

My LORD,



Humbly beg leave to prefix
your Lordship's Name to
a Discourse on the Necessi-
ty of Christ's Satisfaction, to take
away the Sins of the World.

WHAT I intend by the Publicati-
on of it, is, to increase a true Faith
in Jesus Christ, and point out the
Principles laid down in the Gospel,
through a Belief in which only we
can do him real Honour in Suffering
for us.

I wish this Subject had fall'n into
an abler Hand; but as few have gone
before me in this Argument, a
sincere,

DEDICATION.

sincere, though imperfect Attempt towards such a pious Design, I trust will be receiv'd with Favour by your Lordship.

INDEED I form this Judgment of your Lordship's Opinion, not from the Honour I have of any personal Acquaintance with your Lordship, but from the many learned and pious Discourses presented by your Lordship to the World, most seasonably on critical Occasions. And I am confirm'd in it from the numberless Writings of the Infidels, who take especial Care, in all their Infidel Papers deliver'd to the Publick, to throw the most bitter Calumny and Reproaches on your Lordship; which gives me an evident Proof, that they imagine none of their wicked Schemes can take Place, till your Lordship's Character is first brought into Discredit in the World.

EVERY

DEDICATION.

EVERY good Man's Heart must burn within him, whilst he reads the Writings of the Infidels daily publish'd amongst us; 'tis not the Arguments which they offer, that give us the Uneasiness, but the impudent Manner in which they dare to write.

THERE is no Character we see so good, no Station so high, but they take upon them to vilify in those who differ from them; as if these Men had all the Truth on their side, and were injur'd greatly in that they have not already receiv'd the highest Honours in Church and State, for their Attempts to subvert Christianity.

BUT were such Men willing to be convinced by Reason, or softened by gentle Persuasions; your Lordship's own Arguments, drawn in the true Spirit of Meekness, had long ago freed

DEDICATION.

freed us from the Trouble such Men yet daily give us.

THAT your Lordship may long live to enjoy the highest Esteem, which you deservedly merit from all good Men, and remain Superior in Power to the contemptible Malice of the Infidel, as you are in Learning and Goodness; is the Prayer of,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's

Most Humble Servant,

Robert Leeke.



G A L. ii. 21.

*If righteousness come by the Law, then
Christ is dead in vain.*



THE Christian Religion conveys two invaluable Blessings to us, a perfect Rule of Manners, and a Covenant of Mercy to fallen Man.

These Blessings convey every thing to us that we want to know of God in the present Life. We are taught from hence what Measures of Duty and Obedience God expects from his Creatures, and how to be restor'd, after so many Failings, to Favour again. Since God hath made such gracious Discoveries to us in this Life, one would imagine every Man of common Sense would be ready to return Almighty God his best Thanks for them: But 'tis not so in our Days; they who pretend to be the best and wisest Thinkers amongst us, have no Thanks to pay to God for such kind of Favours, but laugh at the Folly of
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those who believe and trust in them. One while these Men ridicul'd our Faith, because they declared the Proof insufficient; but not being able to maintain Infidelity with Credit on that bottom, they have shifted the Plea, and at length tell us, let the Proof be what it will for the Mission of a Saviour, they do not want him; for natural Reason is sufficient to tell us our Duty: Therefore Revelation is useless in point of Instruction. They know from Reason too, that a merciful God will forgive the repenting Sinner without an Atonement; therefore they need no Saviour to die for their Sins. Thus is Man's natural Reason and Strength made sufficient for all Purposes in Religion.

BUT before we part with our dear Redeemer, we intreat them to answer us a few Questions. Do they maintain that the Reason of every Man is sufficient, and therefore Revelation useful in point of Instruction to no one? Or is it only the Reason of many that is so? Perhaps they mean only of a few, that is, a few great Thinkers like themselves, and that such great Genius's have been rais'd up by God in all Ages to be the general Instructors of Mankind, whose Reason or Abilities fall greatly short of that measure of divine Knowledge they have acquir'd. This Opinion I imagine they will chuse to maintain, because it will best suit the Vanity of the Sect.

WAS I to reason this matter with such Men at large, I would allow them to have got as great a Knowledge of divine Truth, as the natural Reason of Man is able to acquire. Moreover, that they had carried their Searches this way as far as *Plato* or *Cicero*, and through the Aid of modern Improvements in natural Philosophy much farther. And against all these Advantages, it may undoubtedly be maintain'd, that 'tis impossible for such acute Reasoners ever to arrive, by the help of Nature, at that degree of Knowledge of divine Truth deliver'd in the inspir'd Writings : But in this Dispute I would by no means allow, all which they pretend to teach from Nature, concerning God and our Duty to him, to be the Acquirements of their own natural Reason ; for as they have seen the Light of the Gospel shining clearly before them, they have certainly borrow'd much Instruction from thence, without having the Virtue to own it. There they have seen many Parts of Duty open'd to the World, which are agreeable to Reason, and yet they are such as natural Reason alone could not have discover'd.

THE true State of this Matter can only be try'd, from those who liv'd before the Age of Christ, or after him, in such Countries where Christ hath not been yet preach'd. The Question thus stated, let the Infidel produce from thence, if he can, such a System of divine Morality as Christ hath taught ; and if he can-

not, which we do assert, then is there a plain matter of Fact against him, which at once confutes all that he can say in Favour of natural Reason, as opposed to the Benefit of Revelation, in point of Instruction in the Rules of Morality.

IN further Prosecution of this Argument, I could produce a large List of Duties which God requires by Christ, which it was impossible for Nature to teach, ere he had revealed them. What Virtue Nature hath taught or can teach, I could shew is now taught upon new and better Principles, extended in Degree, and deliver'd with greater Authority and more Clearness.

BUT I do not intend in this Discourse, to treat this Part of the Argument for Christ at large; I shall therefore leave it, only suggesting a few things, from whence an impartial Searcher of Truth may discern, wherein Nature must submit to the Aid of Revelation, human Knowledge to divine Instruction.

HAD Man, before the coming of Christ, such a clear View either of the divine or human Nature, as is presented in the Gospel of Christ? Did the World understand the Doctrine of the Creation of Man, and a particular Providence of God, as clearly as they have done in these latter Ages? If Men will say they did, let them produce the Books where such Knowledge can be found.

No one can pretend to say, that the Grounds and Reasons of the Corruption of human Nature were ever rightly understood without Revelation, or ever a proper Remedy known, till Christ offered one. The Infidel, I know, is not concern'd about this Part of Knowledge, for he believes no hereditary Corruption of human Nature; and yet this is such a fundamental Truth in Divinity, that the Necessity of a new Revelation in Christ is grounded upon it; and therefore the Infidel takes all the Pains he can to ridicule the sacred History of the Fall of Man.

WITH the true State of human Nature, we see the divine more clearly open'd to us: In it three Persons in the Godhead, each of which hath undertaken a distinct Office for the Recovery of us out of the present Misery and Corruption of our Nature; and amongst other great Helps propos'd, God hath open'd a clear view both of the Nature and Duration of that happy State, which he has reserv'd for Man in a future Life, and what is above all, hath given us a certain Title to it. For could Man have seen by the Eye of Reason within the Clouds, and taken a full View of the Joys of Heaven, yet what would such Knowledge have avail'd without knowing the Way to come at it? and I call upon the Infidel to shew me by what Title he could have hop'd for Heaven, without the Favour of God in Jesus Christ? How either
perfect

perfect Innocence in Man, or sincere Repentance, could have strictly merited a Title to the transcendent Rewards of Heaven? God gave hopes of this State to *Adam*, not for the Observance of the Law of Nature, but of a positive Precept he had enjoyn'd him. He always did, and ever will give this great Happiness on what Terms he pleases: For it is such as no Labour or Merit of ours can purchase. They who ever enjoy it, must accept it first as the voluntary Gift of God. All these are not only so many distinct Favours and Parts of new Knowledge in Christ, but they bring likewise along with them many correspondent Duties owing from us to God for them. For with me it is a very plain Truth, that every Branch of new Instruction offer'd by God, every Benefit conferr'd from thence, becomes a Means to incite, or enlarge our Love, our Hopes or Fears, and must necessarily tend in some degree to influence our moral Obedience.

HENCE are Christians call'd upon to higher degrees of Virtue and Gratitude, than either *Jew* or *Gentile*. We know more of God, and our Duty to him, than either of that People, and have received greater Benefits from him.

THE Sense of Duty in the *Gentile* was to be an Act of Gratitude for Creation and Preservation; in the *Jew* (besides these) for special Miracles of Love conferr'd on that People; we Christians having received yet more plentiful Measures of

Knowledge

Knowledge and Goodness, must exceed both, in Returns of Love and Duty.

FROM the Beginning of the World, we may observe, God never challeng'd the Obedience of his Creatures in vertue of his absolute Dominion, but only in return for Blessings first conferr'd by himself.

LOVE from God was ever to be the Spring of Love to God; and the Manifestation of our Love was to be shewn in Virtue and Obedience. God therefore gradually pouring down his Benefits on his Creatures, expected only the Returns of their Love in Proportion as he first shew'd his Love to them.

HENCE we see the Foundation, wherein God has laid the Necessity of the highest Obedience from Christians, for the Gift of his Son to die for our Sins; and a Security withal given of an happy Eternity: Being the highest Blessings which God could bestow, 'tis but reasonable, as we have received much, we should love much. And as these great Blessings of Pardon of Sin, and eternal Life, were not granted in Covenant either to *Jew* or *Gentile*; as they were the Purchase of his Son's Death; as they are such as no Manner of Goodness in us can challenge, so we may observe on these great Foundations he has laid the Reason and Obligations of our Duty. He calls for Obedience in the new Testament, not now from Creation, but the more wonderful Miracle of his Love; in
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creating Man anew, who had corrupted himself, to Righteousness and true Holiness, and raising him again to the Hopes of an happy Eternity; and whoever is not willing to worship God out of this sense of Duty, or esteem this great Favour of God with that exalted sense of Love and Gratitude which the Scriptures teach; from such a Man God will accept no Worship, Thanks or Praise at all; for in and through the Son only was the Father pleas'd to restore Man to Favour, and by and for the Son's sake must all our Love and Adoration ascend back to the Father. Was the Knowledge of the Infidel much greater in divine Matters than it really is; yet we do maintain, that so long as he refuses to embrace this Principle of loving God for the sake of the Son's Atonement, as our Scriptures are true, all his Morality is good for nothing.

MOREOVER, the excessive Vanity that is in him of pretending to know and practise all Duties to God without divine Assistance, is another false Principle, so evil in itself, that it extinguishes all Pretences to true Religion.

THUS it is with every Infidel who lives in a Christian Country; by denying the Son, he can have no Access to the Father in any Acts of Adoration, or expect any Blessing from him.

So widely different are the very Vitals of Religion taught by the Infidel, and those deliver'd in the inspired Writings.

I SHALL only mention one Discovery more, which the Christian Religion hath made, the Revelation of which, brings along with it the Necessity of a quite new Scheme of Morality. I mean the Offer of Heaven for Body and Soul, in Reward of our Obedience. Hence only do we see the Necessity of being poor in Spirit, of renouncing the present World, and preserving an absolute Purity in Body, Mind, and Thought.

A WORLDLY Temper, or an unclean Person, can never be fit for the Kingdom of Heaven. The Doctrine of our great Teacher therefore, and that of the Heathen Philosopher, is so far from being the same, that the very first moral Precept he delivered, at once overturn'd all the Heathen Philosophy: *Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs, and theirs only, is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

WHERE is Poverty of Spirit, or the Suffering Virtues, recommended amongst the Pagans of old, as qualifying Men for the Views of an happy Eternity?

NOT much sounder is the Plan of Morality, drawn by modern Infidels, from the Imitation of God, and his glorious Perfections.

COMPARE this with the Christian; the greatest Part of which is directed to flow from the Example of Christ: In one Scheme, the Suffering Virtues have no place; in the other, they have the greatest Share, are made absolute-

ly necessary to perfect the Christian, and qualify him for the Kingdom of Heaven.

HAD we known no more of the ultimate End of Man, than the Heathens of old did; I cannot see, that it would have been wrong to have drawn all our Measures of Action from Maxims of Policy and Pleasure proper to this World only, in some View to the Goods of this Life. But such a Practice, and such a Temper, the Gospel forbids absolutely to the Candidates of Heaven, with the highest Reasons; and on those Reasons and Promises only, will or can such exalted Virtue find a real Support. For Men will never be convinced, that they ought to renounce this World, and cross their Desires of it continually, unless for the Hopes of a better: And lest Men should not be willing to submit to this wholesome Discipline, only for the glorious Views set before them, Christ hath added the Promise of divine Assistance for our Support; and as many as are willing to submit, will assuredly feel the glorious Spirit which dictated the holy Scriptures, reaching out Strength to exalt them to go through every severer part of it.

I proceed now to shew the great Happiness we receive in the Covenant of Grace offer'd by Jesus Christ. And under this Head, I do not intend to prove that Christ made a true and proper Atonement for Sin.

THIS Article of Faith, I shall take for granted; and shall shew from thence, that, as far as we can judge, either from Reason or Scripture, there was no other Way, by which we could be delivered from our Sins, but thro' the most precious Blood of his Atonement.

THE Subject therefore of the following Discourse shall be, on the Importance of Christ's Satisfaction.

EVERY true Christian is supposed to believe, that Christ died to make Atonement for Sin. 'Tis a Fundamental in Christianity. But many who will maintain the Truth of Christ's Satisfaction, will not contend for the Necessity of it.

THE Infidel denies both: Yea, and many Divines too, will not scruple dogmatically to teach, that God could have pardon'd Man by an Act of meer Dominion, without Injury done to any of his great Perfections. But I think this Opinion is neither agreeable to Reason or Scripture.

THE Truth then of the Fact being admitted: Let us see what our Reason will judge of such a Fact without Revelation.

WE cannot judge any thing less; that since the Son of God underwent such bitter Sufferings for our Sins, it was the Will of God he should so suffer.

FOR as the Counsels of God are always regulated by perfect Holiness, Justice, Wisdom,

all these must concur in directing his Will to require such Satisfaction for Sin.

I TAKE not upon me from the Light of my own Reason to determine, why God required such Punishment of his Son; whether it was necessary to illustrate his own Holiness, and Detestation of Sin, in the Sight of Men; or a Piece of necessary Justice, due to his own Character as Governor of the World. Under each of these Views, an exemplary Punishment of Sin seems necessary; both these, and many other Reasons might concur, which we cannot precisely fix upon. However this be, certain it is from the Fact itself, that since Christ suffer'd Death as the Price of our Redemption, such a Price or Ransom God required; and if God required it, he required it because it was fitting that he should require it and then it was not fitting that he should pardon Sin without such Satisfaction, though our Reason may not be able to open all the Grounds of the Fitness of such Counsel in God.

ALLOW the Almighty to take Counsel always from his moral Perfections, and you will soon see, that since his Wisdom chose the Death of his Son as the fittest Means to pardon the World by; he could not in Wisdom chuse any other. And what he cannot do in Wisdom, he cannot do at all: And this is all the Necessity we contend for; a Necessity founded in the moral Perfections of God, founded in his Wisdom; for

where

where his Wisdom is, there are ever united in it Justice, Holiness, Goodness.

FOR as the Poet observed, *Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia*: So is it equally true in Divinity, where true Wisdom is, there every other moral Perfection of the Deity unites with it.

AN Action could not be a wise one, were not the Measures of such Wisdom filled up with Justice, Holiness, Goodness.

THE Truth therefore of the Fact, as ordered by a wise Being, proves the Fitness of it; and the Fitness at the same time equally infers the Necessity of it. I would not be thought to infer, that because God was pleased to pardon us, he was therefore obliged to pardon; or that God is always obliged to do, whatever he hath been pleased to do: No, he was not obliged to create Man at all, or pardon him after he had sinned; and that he did so, by transferring our Punishment upon his Son, was an Act of meer Bounty to us. But this we may observe safely upon the Actions of a wise Being, that he is morally obliged to govern all his Actions by perfect Wisdom, that is, to serve the noblest Ends by the best and fittest Means. And therefore, when he was pleased to create, he could not create Man on other Terms, than would serve his own Glory and the Good of his Creatures. In like manner, when he grants his Pardon to Sinners, he can grant such Pardon only on Terms consistent with his own Glory, and the good of the Universe

Universe in general: And we can do no less than form this Judgment of his Actions, though we ourselves cannot always trace the distinct Connexion between the Means God makes use of, and all the Ends intended by them.

2dly, REASON will judge, that since God sent his Son into the World, and suffered him to be spit upon, buffeted, scourged and crucified, such Treatment of the Son of God had not been permitted, could the great Ends God intended by such a Debasement of his Son, have been fully and equally accomplished in any other Way. Could the Life of a Beast, a Man, a Prophet, or an Angel, have ransomed a guilty World, certainly God the Son had not interposed: Nay, we are well assured, that could our Saviour's Prayers and Tears have saved us without his Death, God the Son had not purchased our Salvation at the Price of his own Blood.

THE Heathen could say, from the common Notions Men ever had of the Deity, *Nec Deus interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus inciderit*; and it is very natural to observe, could Man have redeem'd himself, or other inferior Sacrifice supply'd the Place of the Son of God; the Son himself had not humbled himself to have saved us with so painful and severe a Conflict.

View this Dispensation of God in the Relation of Father and Son, and see how it appears in this Light. Had it been consistent with fatherly Tenderness to have given up an only Son to an

igno-

ignominious Death, if there had been found a Place for his Wisdom to have sav'd us any other way?

REASON would naturally charge such a Dispensation, with all the Marks of arbitrary Power and Cruelty. God does not chastise Man in this World, but for wise and merciful Ends; or when those wise and merciful Ends cannot be accomplished any other way, but by such Punishment; much less can we believe he would have laid such Loads of Misery on an innocent Person, his most dearly beloved, his only Son, but in Execution of such great Ends, which could not be fulfilled without it. We cannot believe there was room for Mercy to us, without this Piece of Justice being first executed; nor had there been so, the Relation a Father bears to his Son, had, according to our best Notions, absolutely forbid it.

THESE Reasons seem to me greatly to support the Belief of the Importance of Christ's Satisfaction; but I offer them not as Conclusive; for whatever relates to the Counsels of God, I think natural Reason by no means an equal Judge of, without the help of Revelation.

WE cannot fathom the Depth of his Will in all its Views, no more than we can that of his Nature; and I heartily bless God that he hath been pleas'd to afford my Reason a clearer Light; and I hope I shall ever be found in the Number of those, who think that one Text of Scripture

Scripture hath infinitely more Degrees of Credibility in it, in matters relating to the Will of God, than whole Volumes of the Reasons of *or Religion of Nature*.

WE can judge when any Proposition contradicts our Reason, but cannot, by the short Line of Reason, reach all the Treasures of Wisdom which lie hid in the Counsels of Heaven. Could we do that, we should be as wise as God himself.

A REVELATION from God, touching his own Nature and Will, which is the sole adequate Measure of our Duty to him, as it stands attested in the Gospel History, may be proved to a Demonstration to be a surer Pillar and Ground of the Truth, than any Conjectures either of the Nature or Will of God, suggested by human Reason only. We are not the Fools therefore, who trust in this Evidence, but they who reject it.

MY Reason therefore and Faith, are firmly united in this Proposition, That no one knoweth the Father but the Son; that is, truly and fully the Will of the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

I PASS on therefore from natural Reason, to the better Light of Revelation, and shall from thence clearly prove, that the Scriptures absolutely determine for the Necessity of Christ's Satisfaction.

FROM the holy Scriptures we are informed, that an Atonement is always supposed or declared necessary to take away Sin.

NECESSARY therefore with respect to God; who is morally obliged to punish Sin, or cannot pass by the Sins of Men without a Satisfaction.

IN further Proof of this Doctrine, we can produce many Places of Scripture, which mention the Reasons why God declares he must punish Sin. Sometimes we are refer'd to his Holiness. Thus God declares by the Psalmist, should he pass by the Sins of Men, *man might judge God was such an one as himself*. God punishes therefore the Sinner, in order to illustrate his Holiness in the sight of Men.

IN like manner *Moses* assures us, *that God is ben sanctified*, and his Holiness proclaimed upon Earth, when he revenges himself upon sinners. And thus it is in all Parts of Scripture; wherever the Counsel of God is delivered for the execution of his Wrath against Sin, we are always referred to one or other of his Attributes, to the Vindication of his Authority, which he bears over us, as Governor of the World; never to his arbitrary Will, or the Dictates of mere Dominion.

ST. Paul opening the Counsel of God to the Romans in sending his Son, tells them, that God set him forth for a Propitiation to vindicate his Justice in the Remission of Sin, or Sins past, through the Forbearance of God. Christ therefore

we see, was sent into the World, in order to vindicate the Justice of God, in pardoning the past Transgressions of Men: Which Doctrine plainly instructs us, that had God not sent his Son into the World to make Atonement for Sin, he could not have vindicated his Justice, in that he had winked so long at the Transgressions of Men, committed before Christ came.

THOUGH God had forbore long, and not punish'd us as his Justice directed in the Ages past for the Sins of Men; yet was it necessary that he should require at length Satisfaction for such Sins; which Satisfaction *St. Paul* declares, God received in the Blood of his Son.

'Tis plain therefore from God's own Mouth, that God thinks himself bound in Justice to punish Sin: And accordingly we may observe, that there never was any of his Creatures, either in Heaven or Earth, who have sinned, but have suffered for it; Man in Death, and the Devils in Expulsion from Heaven: Man indeed thro' the Mercy of Christ restored to Favour; but the Devils having no Saviour, are left as Monuments of Divine Wrath in eternal Damnation. And if to these particular Texts of Scripture we add one more found there, *Coloss.* 3. *that God made Man for himself*, that is to set before him his own Glory, or his own great Perfections, to call back suitable Acknowledgments of these his great Perfections from us, in Love and Adoration: If this was

the principal End, why God made Man, and not, as some Writers speak, to make Man great and happy, but only in the second place to make those great and happy, who should first acknowledge the greatness of God in Love and Adoration.

How can God demonstrate that he is holy, in the Sight of Men, or that he hath an inherent Aversion to Sin, if he do not punish for it? To reward Virtue, and punish Vice, are such significant Expressions of God's Holiness, that all his Love of Virtue, and Hatred to Sin, would seem insipid without it; without these very Testimonies, sinful Men might well conclude, that God was like themselves.

How could he be just, I mean, to his own Character, as an holy Being, as a Deliverer of holy Laws, as a Preserver of Order and good Government; if he did not denounce his Threats against the inordinate Actions of Men, and after such Threats leave visible Examples of his Vengeance?

THE Holiness of his Nature, the Goodness of his Laws, and the Honour of his Government, call for this Piece of Justice upon the Offender; and if Men will not acknowledge these great Truths, that belong to the Deity, by a suitable Behaviour in this World, 'tis necessary they should be compell'd by a Sense of Pain to testify it in the next. Whatever foolish Man, who can make a Mock at Sin, may think

of this Matter, the great Governor of the World, will never suffer his Government of any People in any Period of Time, to be transmitted to future Ages, either in the View of Heaven or Earth, without leaving evermore the distinguishing Marks of his Love to Virtue, and Detestation of Sin, by Rewards and Punishments.

GREAT and Holy, Just and Good, hath God shewed himself in one View before us, by giving us his Son, wherein he hath punish'd Sin, yet saved the Sinner; and united in one great Action, the Harmony of all his Perfections.

SINCE then it is the Scripture Account, that God cannot pass by Sin without a Satisfaction in Blood: I think there is a plain Demonstration, that no Creature either in Heaven or Earth, could truly and properly atone for Sin. It is not in the Power of any Creature to make a proper Atonement for Sin; for all the Powers he hath to act withal are God's Bounty to him. When he exerts these Powers and Faculties as far as he is able for the Honour of God, herein he does only his Duty, and shall have his Reward; the best he can do, is what he is bound to do; here is no Goodness, or Virtue, or Merit, to spare, which he can place to another's Account.

HAD there been any Friend to Mankind of distinguished Piety on Earth, or one in high

Honour

Honour in the Court of Heaven, that could have ransomed a guilty World; yet such a Mediator less than God himself, had not been suitable for us; for Men would have thought him worthy of the highest Honours they could have paid, that could have eas'd the World of their guilty Fears, and united Heaven and Earth in Friendship again.

Happily therefore was it order'd, that he who was appointed to manage this great Affair, of such Importance to Mankind, gave the World Proofs of his own inherent Divinity, by the Titles which he assumed, the divine Attributes which he shew'd, the Offices he bore, and the Worship he claimed: God the Father plainly vindicating every Claim our great Mediator made, before us, when he rais'd him openly from the dead, and plac'd him at his own right hand in Glory: And by the way we may observe, that after God the Son had shew'd such astonishing Acts of Goodness to Mankind, it seem'd a proper Time to recognize his Divine Majesty; such an endearing Character of Saviour and Redeemer, could not fail to call forth the devoutest Acknowledgments of every ingenuous Mind: And upon this Truth an ingenious Writer hath well observed, that had not the Creator and Redeemer been the same God which worketh all in all, Men would have been apt to have forgot their Creator, thro' the superior Obligations they had to their Redeemer;

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at least Honour, and Praise, and Thanks, had been equally divided between them.

FARTHER yet, I have one Argument to offer for the Importance of Christ's Satisfaction, which of itself is to me plainly convincing above all the rest; it is drawn, not from a single Text of Scripture, but plainly insisted on through a long Chain of Reasoning in the Epistles of St. *Paul*, which he uses as the most powerful Reason to gain both *Jew* and *Gentile* to the Christian Faith.

IN the course of this Argument, he never in the least mentions, or so much as hints that God could, if he had pleased, have pardon'd Man, without any Atonement; or that the Virtue and Efficacy of Christ's Atonement, is derived from the arbitrary Will of God; but is of itself of such inherent Worth, as to merit our Redemption, and deliver us from the Evils of Sin.

HE tells the *Gentiles*, that Nature hath no help for Sinners; for could our Righteousness with God have been obtained by any Law before Christ, it had been by the Law of *Moses*, Gal. iii. 21.

To the *Jews* he says, that their Law was equally defective in the great Points, offering neither Justification from Sin, nor eternal Life. Neither the Blood of Bulls nor of Goats could take away Sin, and Sin remaining, no Favour with God, or eternal Life, was to be expected in that Dispensation.

WHAT was wanting to both *Jew* and *Gentile*, he shews that Christ only is able to perform ; in the Defence of Christ, he enters into the Nature and value of his Sacrifice, demonstrates the Reality of his Atonement, and the inherent Excellency of it, from the Dignity of Christ's Person, the two Natures God and Man joyned together ; declaring from thence, that the Blood of Christ only could reach all the Evils of Sin, purify the Offender's Conscience, in that it had an *eternal Spirit*, or divine Person united with it.

THAT the Redeemed and Redeemer were of one Nature, therein fitted according to the Law of Proxies, to suffer the Punishment in the very Nature that sinned ; and yet fit withal, in Virtue of his unchangeable Priesthood, his other Nature, to stand before God, and intercede for us, able to save to the uttermost all those who are willing to draw nigh to God, through Faith in his Blood.

If an Atonement in Blood was not really necessary to take away Sin, why does the Apostle say, *without shedding of Blood there is no Remission of Sin ?*

If God could have published the Pardon of Mankind by a Word or a Nod from Heaven, or was it consistent with the divine Attributes to have decreed Remission of Sin on any Terms, it is very strange the Apostle should not drop the least hint of any such Power in God ; but instead of that should draw entirely the whole Grounds
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of our Salvation, from the inherent Value of Christ's Sacrifice, and not the Merits of Christ's Sacrifice in any degree from the arbitrary Appointment of God.

It might have been easily said in a few Words, that God would have it so, or that he will not pardon without Faith in the Blood of his Son; and then all the Pains the Apostle hath taken to resolve the sole Grounds of our Redemption into the peculiar Value and Importance of Christ's Sacrifice, as necessary to make Atonement with God, should have been spared; for on that Ground of our Justification, they could have had no place in the Argument at all.

ACCORDING to the Reasoning of many Divines, God was at Liberty to have granted Remission of Sin through the Blood of Bulls and of Goats, or on any other Terms; but this is expressly contrary to the Apostle's Assertion; with this Opinion must we charge the *Arian* Sect; and therefore we may observe, when they speak of the great Works, either of Redemption or Sanctification, they speak in such Language as resolves the entire Merits of these into the Will and Power of God the Father, making the Son and Holy Ghost like *Moses* of old, purely ministerial in each Work.

THEY never speak, as our Church Catechism declares, *that God the Son redeemed us*, and God the holy Ghost sanctified us; but God the Fa-
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ther redeemed us by the Son, and sanctified us
 by the holy Spirit ; so cautious are they in all
 their Language, not to give the Share of the
 real Merit of either great Work, either to Son
 or Holy Ghost ; as well knowing, if they did,
 such a Declaration would virtually prove each
 Person to be true God. But *St. Paul* reasons
 not after the Manner of these Men, he attri-
 butes the real Merit of our Justification to the
 Sacrifice of Christ, and resolves the Value of
 his Sacrifice into the Dignity of his Person, into
 the Sacrifice joined with the eternal and divine
 Spirit ; and because such Sacrifice had every me-
 ritorious Virtue in it, therefore God remitted
 the Sin on its Account. Moreover, so Neces-
 sary and Important was Christ's Sacrifice, that
 the Apostle expressly says, *Had former sacrifices*
been able to have atoned for sin, then no place had
been found for the latter one of Christ ; and again,
Could justification have come by the law of Moses,
then Christ had died in vain. From which and
 many other Passages that might be recited from
 the same Apostle, we may see plainly, if we
 do not wink hard, the following Truths present
 all the way in the Apostle's Mind, whilst he
 was treating this Argument with Jew and Gen-
 tile, viz. That Sin cannot be remitted without an
 atonement in Blood ; that the efficient Cause
 of Man's Redemption is to be attributed to the
 blood of Christ, in whom, and for whose sake
 God forgave our Sins ; and that Christ would

not have shed his Blood, or his Blood had been shed in vain, could our Redemption have come by the Law, either of Nature or *Moses*, or by any Sacrifice or Means, less than the most holy and precious Blood of the Son of God. The *Arians* denying the real Divinity of the Son, fall into the *Socinian* Scheme in this Article; for they well know, if Christ be not true God, he could make no true and proper Atonement for Sin; therefore they suppose no true and proper Atonement in the Work of our Redemption. But this is plainly unscriptural, as we have seen; so dangerous is it to alter one Article of Faith, for it draws other fundamental Errors after it, and it not only breaks up the Foundation of our Faith, but affects the Christian Morality in a very vital Part, as we shall see presently.

THERE is so little Knowledge of true Divinity, or at least Relish for it in this wretched Age of Infidelity, that perhaps we may be asked, since we attribute so much Merit to the Son, What share the Father had in our Redemption? I Answer, Not less Mercy and Goodness in one than the other; because when the Father might have punished sinful Man, and his Justice required that he should, he was willing in great Goodness, to transfer the Punishment from us to his Son: This Act of transferring the Punishment in the Commutation of Persons, was an Act of pure Dominion in the Father, and flowed from great Mercy: The Son freely

freely accepting the Punishment, Justice was done to Sin, and Man escaped.

THUS hath Mercy and Truth met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.

LET us now draw an Inference or two from the Doctrine we have delivered.

FROM what hath been said, we may judge of the Pretences the Infidel makes to superior Wisdom, in not believing in Jesus Christ.

HIS Faith he will tell you must submit to his Reason, and his Reason won't allow him either to acknowledge the Truth, or rely on the Merit of Christ's Atonement for Sin. Such is the Infidel's Reason; but the true Christian admits the Truth, and acknowledges his Salvation is owing to the Merit of Christ's Atonement.

WHICH sort of Men hath most Reason and Sense amongst them, may be determin'd in a few Words.

WE Christians then believe and trust in Christ, because we have undoubted Evidence, that God will not pardon Sin without an Atonement, and that Christ died on purpose to make such Atonement; and that as God did raise up his Son from the dead, and shewed him openly, when risen again to the World, he gave irresistible Proof, that he had accepted such Death of his Son as the Atonement and Ransom for our Sins.

WE then believe all this, because we cannot disprove a strong, clear, and well attested

Matter of Fact; for as sure as it can be proved that Christ died on the Cross, so sure it is, that he died to satisfy the Justice of God's Wrath for the Sins of the World.

THE Infidel cannot disprove the Matter of Fact, and yet will not believe the Truth and Doctrine dependant upon, and inseparably connected with it. Judge now then, who can judge at all of the plainest Proposition in the World, which Side hath the strongest Proof; the Infidel who gives us a Creed drawn from his own Conjectures only on the Will of God, or ours drawn from the Will of God, attested by the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ; for 'tis plain, that till these Facts are disproved, every thing they offer which is inconsistent with, or contrary to such Facts, can proceed from nothing less than the highest Prejudice in thinking imaginable, or rather no thinking at all.

UPON the whole then, where is true Wisdom and a right Ingenuity of thinking to be found? Is it not always in those who are govern'd by the strongest Reasons; who determine their Judgment by the clearest Evidence? If these are the genuine Characters of a truly free and great Soul, of a Mind wholly void of Slavery and Superstition; then assuredly is the Christian Believer, the truly wise and free Thinker; and they who can ridicule our Faith, or reject the Merits of a Saviour, are the Men of all others most Weak, the greatest Bigots, and most Supersti-

Superstitious. Infidelity in a Christian Country, must always be resolved into a weak Head, or an evil Heart ; Ignorance or Vice, or both, always make up the Composition.

2dly, If our Doctrine be the true Account of the Sense of Scripture ; it is certainly the Duty of all Teachers of Christ's Doctrine, when they are preaching up the Merits of a Saviour, that they contend not only for the Truth, the Expediency of Christ's Mission, but go on with *St. Paul* to insist on the Importance, and evident Necessity of it.

An open Infidel does not do more Mischief than a bad Defence ; for we may easily betray a good Cause, by putting it on too narrow a bottom, or making unwary Concessions.

Thus whilst we scruple to contend for the absolute Necessity of a Saviour, the need Man had of a perfect Rule in Morality, and of a Covenant of Grace to fallen Man ; hence the Infidel hath taken occasion to deny sometimes the Truth, and sometimes the want of them at all.

GRANT the *Socinian*, that an Atonement was not necessary with God in order to forgive Sin ; and he will have a good Reason for maintaining that Christ died not to atone for Sin at all ; for it will be difficult to conceive, that a Person so high in Nature, and so dear to the Father, should receive such a severe Punishment laid upon him by the Father, if such Punishment had not been necessary

necessary to the Remission of Sin. The Doctrine stands very safe, and clear of all Difficulties the other Way; that as the Fact was undoubtedly true, it was therefore necessary: For as it is undoubtedly true, that the Almighty governs all his Counsels, by perfect Wisdom and Justice; so these Attributes in God made it necessary for him to require the perfect Atonement which Christ made in his Blood. And we are further confirmed in this Truth from Revelation, which declares for the *Necessity* of Christ's Atonement, that our Redemption was owing to it; inasmuch, that had Christ not come, we had died in our Sins.

Lastly, I would observe the Necessity of maintaining the Importance of Christ's Satisfaction, from the Influence it hath upon the Christian Morality. This Sense of our Faith we contend for, as it is the Gospel Sense of it; moreover, as the ground and vital Principle from whence must spring all our Acts of Love and Duty to God.

OUR Love to God the Father is directed in Scripture to flow from a just Sense of his Mercy in transferring our Punishment on his Son: To the Son for freely accepting such Punishment in our Place.

THEY who have not this Sense of Faith, have no true Principle of Love to God; for he who is not willing to acknowledge the Work of our Redemption, as the invaluable Act of Mercy

in Father and Son, and make all the return of his Love, as so many Expressions of his Gratitude flowing from these Principles, can pay no Duty to God that he will accept; for the ground of all Mercies, which Sinners receive from Heaven, is owing to the Son; and therefore all the Returns of our Love must ascend back to the Father, by the Son, and for his sake.

THESE are the Gospel Principles by which we must love God.

IMAGINE now with some Writers, that an Atonement was not necessary, or that the Almighty could, consistent with his moral Perfections, have publish'd our Pardon by a Word or a Nod from Heaven; then that exalted Measure of the Love of God, in giving us his Son, as described by the Apostles, greatly sinks in our Esteem; the Love and Honour which we owe to Christ, for the Share he had in our Redemption, immediately languishes; and in such an Opinion the vital and animating Principle of our Duty grows dead, and we have at once a new Principle of Gospel Duties, or rather no animating Principle at all.

BUT take this Matter in the View of the Importance and Necessity of Christ's Satisfaction: Then we see at once with what Difficulty our Salvation was obtained; what stupendous Love there was in both Father and Son; and as such Love in both was beyond all Expression, so must such exalted Love ever raise up the Mind

Mind of the devout Worshipper into the highest Sentiments of Love and Honour, and make all Christians ready to distinguish the height of their Love, by the Degrees of their Obedience.

To conclude : Not only this, but every Article of our holy Faith, is in some degree important to the Uses of Morality ; for every Article of the Christian Faith, is a further Discovery either of the Wisdom, Power, or Goodness of God to Man ; the better therefore we believe the more Reasons and Motives we shall have to our Obedience.

ALL our Acts of Faith will beget so many new Springs of Love, or Fear ; and as they increase, Virtue and Obedience will not fail to increase with them.

God grant therefore, that Faith may increase our Days, and Love to the Father for the Sake of his Son : To whom with the holy Ghost be ascribed all Honour, Glory, Love, and Adoration, evermore.

F I N I S

